# TUTOR GUIDE 2025

This document provides guidelines on how teaching assistants can be deployed meaningfully and efficiently to enhance teaching and learning at UP.

## Key role players involved in supporting teaching support staff at UP:

- deputy deans of Teaching and Learning
- faculty tutor coordinators (academic success coaches, administrators, and lecturers)
- the senior teaching support coordinator
- education consultants
- instructional designers
- teaching support staff (tutors, teaching assistants, laboratory assistants, demonstrators, and assistant lecturers)

## 1. What are tutorials?

Tutoring is a co-curricular activity directly related to teaching and learning. The aim is to ensure that students have a better understanding of the knowledge and skills in a module and to deepen student learning in a peer-supported environment, which will influence retention and success in that module and eventual graduation. Teaching support staff are assistants appointed by departments focused on module-oriented academic support and general academic development and guidance. Departments label the roles and functions of these assistants in unique ways depending on the context, eg, tutor, marker, academic trainee, assistant lecturer, student assistant, etc



### Benefits of tutorials

- Students receive subject-oriented academic support (e.g., through tutors providing explanations, clarifying difficult concepts, and offering alternative learning strategies).
- Tutorials create an environment where students feel confident asking questions and seeking help; this then allows students to create stronger learning communities.
- Tutors can provide academics with feedback about concepts/sections of the curriculum that students experience as difficult, abstract, or complex.
- Tutors can provide students with feedback on their learning.

## 2. Appointment of tutors

The faculties are responsible for advertising, setting the requirements, and making all appointments. Below are some general standards that may apply to appointing tutors across all faculties.

- **Required skills:**

Teaching support staff are required to demonstrate academic excellence as the primary criterion for selection. The applicant must have completed the module(s) they wish to tutor. The selection process will consider the applicant;s academic performance in the specific module(s) they are applying to tutor.

- **Hours of service:**

Teaching support staff are appointed for a maximum of 96 hours per semester across all modules and faculties. They may not be appointed for any additional hours in any capacity beyond this limit, as it is important to ensure that these additional responsibilities do not interfere with their studies. The total number of hours is distributed over the designated weeks of the semester, averaging 12 to 13 hours per week.

Payment for these hours will be combined and made in instalments over the semester, with the first payment issued upon successful appointment by the Human Resources Department. The University will not provide additional benefits to teaching support staff, including retirement, medical coverage, or any other form of compensation or bonuses.

## 3. Training

How do we support our tutors at the University of Pretoria to ensure they provide efficient and meaningful tutorials?

To ensure that teaching support staff are well equipped to offer face-to-face and online academic support, all newly appointed staff must complete the online self-paced clickUP course. This course should be completed before the start of the academic year. Teaching support staff will receive an automated letter of participation upon completing the online course.

The Department for Education Innovation is responsible for the general training of teaching support staff in educational aspects, in line with the Policy on Academic Professional Development: Teaching and Learning (S5126/22). The department and the education consultant providing the training should agree on the content of the training. Scheduled training dates are communicated to faculties, and requests for customised sessions are addressed as needed.

### Institutional tutor training

The link is shared with faculty tutor coordinators to share with all newly appointed tutors. The following link can be used to access the 2025 self-paced training: https://clickup.up.ac.za/webapps/blackboard/execute/enrollCourse?context=INMENU&amp;course_id=_182762_1

**The institutional tutor training covers these five themes:**

1. Introduction to tutoring
2. Tutoring for learning in higher education
3. Exploring tutorial spaces
4. Knowing your students
5. Evaluating your tutorial space

**The key outcomes of the training are to ensure that participants can**

- analyse and reflect on the purpose of tutorials in higher education within the South African context;
- understand and reflect on their roles as tutors and change agents in creating a learning environment where all students can thrive;
- reflect on and discuss the significance of tutoring for engaged learning;
- become familiar with a range of teaching and learning approaches applicable to tutoring environments; and
- understand the UP context while embracing student diversity and student agency.

## 4. Smart marking

The training introduces teaching support staff to strategies to address inherent challenges associated with marking and how to be an efficient smart marker within a hybrid teaching environment. The training is offered in two parts, with the second being designed for participants who will utilise online marking tools.

**Part 1: Marking principles and paper-based assessments**

This is an online synchronous session. This training is compulsory for teaching support staff involved in marking assessments.

By the end of this training, teaching support staff will be able to

- implement marking procedures effectively.
- distinguish between formative and summative assessments.
- apply marking practices that reflect an understanding of the core principles of marking.
- demonstrate proficiency in ethical marking using a memo/rubric/marking scheme; and
- reflect on their marking practices to provide constructive feedback to lecturers and students.

**Part 2: Online marking tools—self-paced**

This online course applies to **ONLY** those who will be using clickUP and/or Turnitin marking tools.

**IMPORTANT:** teaching support staff who will be signing up for part 2 are expected to complete the self-paced course online before the recommended due date and time, which will make them eligible for the letter of participation. By the end of this course, teaching support staff will be able to

- use the appropriate online marking tools (clickUP and/or Turnitin) to assign marks and provide feedback to students for essay questions and assignments (where relevant/applicable).

## 5. Tutorial attendance data

The teaching support staff are responsible for ensuring they capture tutorial attendance data for all tutorial sessions and student consultations. The tutor app is one of the latest innovations developed by the Department for Education Innovation and was introduced to the University community in 2024 to meet institutional needs. The Department for Education Innovation provides training and support for faculty tutor coordinators and teaching support staff in utilising the app. All enquiries about the app can be sent to Ms Esther Mphanda (esther.mphanda@up.ac.za) and Mr Bonza Majozi (bonza.majozi@up.ac.za).

**This three-app system includes:**

- *Student app (tutorial app).* Designed for students to capture their attendance and give feedback on tutorials.
- *Facilitator app.* Created for lecturers and tutors.
- *Coordinator app.* Intended for tutor coordinators.

**Benefits of using the tutor app to capture tutorial attendance data:**

- Students can share experiences in real time and record their attendance and engagement.
- Lecturers receive early warnings, informed intervention support, and records of active students. They can correlate this information with student feedback from teaching surveys and other institutional data.
- Tutor coordinators now have a standard way of collecting quality tutorial data, reducing their administrative workload.
- Deputy deans (Teaching and Learning) and HoDs have accessible data that can be used for appeals, institutional reports, and institutional planning.
- The Department for Education Innovation will use the data from the app to report on University Capacity Development Grants and to support institutional research on student success.
- Using the app will reduce the administrative effort involved in collecting and collating tutorial attendance data.
- The app will improve the quality of the data collected.
- The app encourages a culture of reflective practice.
- The app offers a contextualised, central, in-house platform for data management.

## 6. The Department for Education Innovation's role in supporting tutorials

The Department for Education Innovation introduced the role of senior teaching support coordinator in 2021. The senior teaching support coordinator role includes:

- managing and overseeing various teaching support staff programmes within the institution (eg, tutors, teaching assistants, laboratory assistants, demonstrators, and assistant lecturers); and
- coordinating, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the development, performance, and impact of funded teaching assistant programmes at UP, including sharing information regarding training dates and registration processes and collaborating on policies related to teaching support staff.

Senior teaching support coordinator contact details:
Ms Esther Mphanda (esther.mphanda@up.ac.za)

## 7. Supporting documents

More information can be obtained in the following documents:
https://www.up.ac.za/article/2754069/up-policiesand-other-important-documents

Guidelines for Implementing the UP Tutoring System:
https://www1.up.ac.za/cs/groups/staff/documents/document/chby/ndcy/~edisp/uppr472517.pdf

Policy on Teaching Support Staff:
https://www1.up.ac.za/cs/groups/staffandstudent/@contrib/documents/document/chby/ndcy/~edisp/uppr472516.pdf
(policy is under review )